



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** October 22, 2020

**Agenda Item:** 2021 Fishing Regulations

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 10 minutes

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**Background:** The fish regulation-setting process is conducted on a four-year cycle with the last four-year review occurring for the 2020 fishing regulations. Every four years FWP seeks input from staff and the general public for ideas and concerns that might be addressed through regulation changes. Regulation changes made the other three years (or “off cycle” changes) must meet one or more of the following criteria to be considered: 1) Clarifications: regulation change is needed to clarify intent of regulation or to correct typos or other errors that led to erroneous information in regulations; 2) Enforcement: regulation change is needed to improve enforcement efforts, to prevent illegal take, or to clarify intent to reduce innocent violations; 3) Conservation: regulation change is needed to conserve or protect the population of any species; 4) Relevancy: regulation no longer has a real management purpose or value and there is little public following, constituency or controversy; 5) Management Plans: FWP has committed to implementing regulation changes if certain events transpire (e.g., changes in fish populations, angling pressure, catch rates, etc.), typically based upon goals or management objectives defined through a publicly vetted process. Since 2021 is an “off cycle” year only proposals that were brought forward by Fisheries and Enforcement staff and meet one of the five criteria outlined above are proposed. At the August meeting, the department proposed 20 regulation changes which were approved for public comment.

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** The department took public comment on the proposed changes from August 17 to September 17. Eleven comments were received from individuals and sporting organizations. Of the 11 comments, 4 were generally in support of proposed changes, 3 generally supported with some additional proposed changes, and 4 were comments on topics not part of the department proposal. The department’s response to comments can be found under separate cover. One additional regulation for the Shields River was added after the public comment period. The department did not make any significant changes to the proposed regulations after reviewing public comment.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** The commission could choose to approve the proposed fishing regulations as presented; not approve the proposed fishing regulations; or pick specific proposals to approve or not approve. The department recommends approving the fishing regulations as proposed.

**Proposed Motion:** I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the 2021 fishing regulations.